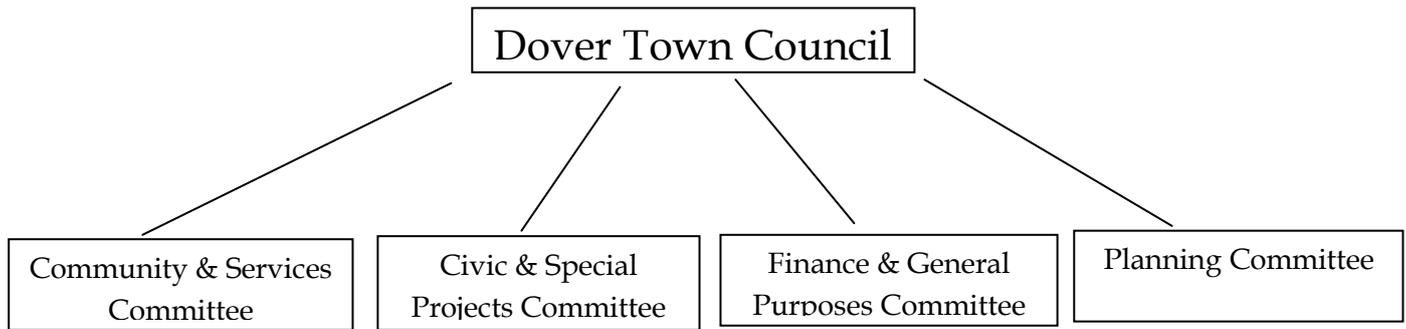


DOVER TOWN  
COUNCIL  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2014/15





Dover Town Council comprises 18 Councillors and met 7 times during 2014/15 with a further 28 meetings held by Committees. The Mayor is a member by virtue of office of all committees. Committee Membership for 2014/15 was as follows:-

**Community & Services Committee**

Cllr Sue Jones (Chair)  
 Cllr Stewart Dimmock (Vice Chair)  
 Cllrs Neil Rix, Mick Smith, Bobby Royston, Anne Smith, Sheila Amos, Ronnie Philpott

**Civic & Special Projects Committee**

Cllr Ronnie Philpott (Chair)  
 Cllr Anne Smith (Vice Chair)  
 Councillors Mick Smith, Stewart Dimmock, Neil Law, John Goodwin, Viv Revell

**Finance & General Purposes Committee**

Cllr Gordon Cowan (Chair)  
 Cllr Jim Hood (Vice Chair)  
 Cllrs Sheila Amos, John Goodwin, Pat Sherratt, Neil Rix

**Planning Committee**

Cllr Pam Brivio (Chair)  
 Cllr Jim Hood (Vice Chair)  
 Cllrs Stewart Dimmock, Ronnie Philpott, Chris Precious

Attendance at scheduled meetings: -

Amos	67%	Sherratt	75%
Brivio	89%	A. Smith	83%
Cowan	100%	M. Smith	83%
Dimmock	35%	Tranter	14%
Goodwin	67%		
Hood	Dispensation - ill health		
Jones	85%		
Law	29%		
May	43%		
Philpott	96%		
Precious	75%		
Revell	29%		
Rix	34%		

It was a busy and challenging year for Councillors at Dover Town Council. When this Council was elected in 2011 it agreed a four year Ambition Plan containing its objectives and goals. In its final year in office, the Council set out to complete its remaining aspirations with over 75% of the Ambition Plan already achieved.

### **SUPPORTING LOCAL SERVICES AND ORGANISATIONS**

The Town Council works in partnership with a large number of groups and organisations from the smallest community group to the County Council to make sure it provides the maximum benefit to Dover and its residents. Working together takes many forms from financial investment to providing people power, insurance, advice, contacts and facilities. We have meeting rooms that are available to hire at Maison Dieu House, these are used free of charge by charities and voluntary & community groups working for the benefit of our town, such as Citizens Advice Bureau, U3A and the Dover Partnership Against Crime.

There are two forms of grant available. The Councillor Grant Scheme allows individual Councillors to direct funds where they feel they will be of most benefit in their own wards, or perhaps, across the Dover Town Area. Each Councillor has an annual fund of £1,000. Below is a list of recipients that received funding through the Town Councillor Grant scheme in 2014/15.

<b>ORGANISATION</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>		<b>ORGANISATION</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
Western Heights Preservation Society	£500		Goschen Rd / Northbourne Ave Allotment Assoc	£250
Deal Festival	£500		Triangles Community Centre	£500
Street Art CIC	£250		White Cliffs Creative Guild	£550
Staffordshire Regiment	£1500		Live Heritage	£499
Dover Town Carnival	£200		Active Us!	£200
15 <sup>th</sup> St Andrews Scouts	£250		Cross Links Youth Club	£1,250
354 (Dover) Squadron ATC	£250		DDC	£496.25
Charlton Toddler Group	£600		Charles Lister Recycled Teenagers Club	£200
Riding for the Disabled	£240		Aycliffe Primary School	£400
Castle St Area Society	£449		Association of Living Arts	£2,025
Tower Hamlets Forum	£300		Dover Karate Club	£250
St Nicholas Bingo Club	£250		The Big Reveal	£600
White Cliffs Music Festival	£779.70		Dover Youth Theatre	£535
Clarendon & Westbury Community Association	£1,500		Dover Society	£435
PS Breastfeeding CIC	£200		Dover Food Bank	£250
Footprints Nursery	£250		Hi Kent	£376
Porchlight	£819.61		Dover Soup Kitchen	£891.62

In addition to Councillors Grants, Committees have also chosen to support some activities in the town financially. Below is a list of groups and organisations that benefitted from these in 2014/15.

ORGANISATION	PURPOSE OF GRANT	AMOUNT	COMMITTEE AWARDED FROM
Dover Music Festival	Towards a sustainable weekend music festival	£12,000 over 3 years	Town Council
Port of Dover Regatta	2014 Regatta	£2,000	Civic & Special Projects
Street Art CIC	2014 Street Art Festival	£2,500	Civic & Special Projects
Association of Living Arts	Town TV/Workshops	£4,860	Civic & Special Projects
Dover Arts Development	Workshops	£550	Civic & Special Projects
Channel Swimming Association	Parking Permit	£125	Civic & Special Projects
White Cliffs Creative Guild	Christmas in the Charlton Centre	£1,000	Civic & Special Projects
The Dover Film Festival	2015 Dover Film Festival and new camcorder	£1,250	Civic & Special Projects
Whitfield & Aspen School	Toward the cost of developing a Celebration Garden	£1,907.33	Civic & Special Projects
Channel Swimming Association	Support towards CSA for the purchase of a seafront 6 month car parking permit.	£125	Civic & Special Projects

### **IMPROVING THE TOWN:**

The Planning Committee commented on 107 applications made within the town. It also joined with the Town Team in commissioning some visionary drawings of the Market Square and surroundings to persuade DDC to invest in better linkages and a lovelier public space ahead of the St James redevelopment. As a result a partnership of DTC, Town Team, KCC, DDC, Highways England and others is undertaking work to prepare for funding applications to improve traffic and pedestrian usage, transport links and physical improvements in the existing commercial centre of Dover.

The Council's joint working on Section 215 enforcement with DDC and the Dover Society has led to many physical improvements to rundown buildings in the town. Over 60% of those who have been issued with warnings or notices by planning enforcement officers have carried out the required repairs and decorations. DTC continues to work with Dover District Council to ensure that the landlords and homeowners keep their properties smart and in a good state of repair and it seems our message is getting across to landlords and property owners.

Always seeking to improve the appearance of the town, the Town Council contributes to a number of schemes run by local organisations. This includes planting schemes and clean-up projects. Last year the Council started brightening up the town by improving the street furniture; bollards, benches and bins were all painted in a nautical blue with gold bands. This year, the original blue street furniture was re-painted and freshened up and the scheme was then extended so that street furniture from the Town Hall to the underpass was smartened up. The before and after photos show just how much this has improved the appearance of the town.



*BEFORE*



*AFTER*

£40,000 has been spent on replacing the obsolete, dirty and ineffective lighting in the precinct with new, energy efficient columns in a scheme designed by KCC to improve the safety and reduce clutter. The Council also had the precinct and Square jet washed and the change in colour of the paving was dramatic!

The Town Council has spoken out strongly against the 6am – 11pm + hours granted for the sale of off premises consumption of alcohol (off-licences) in the Dover Town wards. Living with the constant nuisance of street drinkers and drunks in Dover we are keen to see that a strategic multi-agency approach is used to manage off-licence premises, where the street drinkers get alcohol. Our staff and Councillors have received training on licensing law and this year made representation at 11 licensing hearings. Alongside this, we provided £750 funding to the Dover Street Pastors who go to the assistance of drunk and distressed weekend revellers in Dover.

### **PROMOTING TOURISM**

The Dover Town Greeters welcomed even more recruits to greet and guide visitors to the town. The Greeters in their distinctive royal blue fleeces are in the process of setting up a Community Interest Company to widen the scope of their activities. The Pebbles kiosk on the seafront also offers tourist information with our support. We continue to fund the Visitor Information Centre which is at the Museum in Market Square.

New fingerposts were installed in blue and gold replacing the out of date signage pointing either to long gone attractions or in the wrong direction. DTC's contribution of 50% of the running costs keeps the Visitor Information Centre in action. Two beautiful cast steel bluebird arches now show the way through the underpass to the Seafront and the Town while the pathway to the Cliffs from Eastcliff has been cleared and the neighbouring garages and gates painted to make it more inviting. We are awaiting the final decision on a work of art commissioned in partnership with Up on the Downs and DAD to mark the path as the Gateway to the Cliffs.

We continue to provide funding to ensure there are public toilets in Dover – at Biggin Hall, in the 3 community toilet scheme members – McDonalds in Biggin St., Macari's in Pencester Road and at the Bull in London Road -and also at the Pebbles CIC Kiosk at the Eastern Docks end of Marine Parade. The hand drawn Dover map has proved a runaway success with visitors and locals alike and an updated version with 3 walks around the town and its surroundings is ready to go to print.

### **EVENTS**

The Town Council provides the town's Christmas tree and Festive lights, which were switched on following an afternoon of fun and entertainment. Numerous schools, local groups and organisations stage displays, run stalls and raise money for charities, including Dover Lions, the 69 Motorcycle Club, Rotary Club, London Road Community Forum (LRCF), DODS, DAPA and many more.

We are always inundated with requests to perform and do our best to include as much local talent as the schedule allows! A big thank you goes to Coombe Valley transport, who annually provide a 'curtain-sider vehicle; which acts as our main stage.

The Mayor and panto characters from the Marlowe Theatre switched the lights on to great applause!



*(Christmas Celebrations 2014)*

Always keen to encourage local people to participate in sport and fitness; Dover Town Council funded and arranged the 41<sup>st</sup> Dover/ Calais Festival of Sport in partnership with the Ville de Calais. This year the event took place on Dover soil and included everything from swimming to fencing and shooting. We were obviously delighted when Dover took home the cup for the 4<sup>th</sup> year running!

The Town Council is proud to host the town's annual Remembrance service at the People of Dover War Memorial each year.



*(Ringing the Zeebrugge Bell, 2014)*

This year marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War and to mark this, the garden around the memorial was re-turfed and replanted. Volunteers, including veterans, have set up and run the annual Field of Remembrance on the lawn of the War Memorial for many years and this year we funded 200 new black crosses to replace the now rather shabby originals. Dover Town Council also commemorates the anniversary of the Zeebrugge Raid, carried out by the Dover Patrol on St Georges Day in 1918 with a service at the graves of Baron Keyes of Zeebrugge and Dover and casualties of the 1918 raid in St James' Cemetery. After the war, the King of the Belgians presented Dover with the Zeebrugge Bell to mark the eternal friendship of the two ports. The bell (on the balcony of the Maison Dieu) is rung by the Mayor of Dover every year on 23<sup>rd</sup> April in memory of those who lost their lives in the raid on the Zeebrugge mole. A wreath was also laid at the Dunkirk Plot at the far end of St James' Cemetery to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Dunkirk Miracle/Operation Dynamo.

The People of Dover Awards were held for the third year with a large number of nominations and a huge number of votes.

The Dover Mercury, which celebrates its 150<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2015 were our partners and nominees and supporters attended the Annual Town Meeting to see the winners announced amongst much celebration.



## **HISTORY AND HERITAGE**

Dover Town Council owns and maintains the historic Maison Dieu House, a listed building in the heart of Dover. Built in 1665, it is thought to be the town's oldest residential property. Councillors enabled Maison Dieu House to be part of the Heritage Open Days with regalia and other historic artefacts on show. Ashford based specialists carried out repairs to the Dover Jewel and the Badge of the Mayor's Chain bringing them back to their full beauty. The civic guide was revised this year and gives pointers on protocol and practice in relation to the Mayoralty in Dover, which dates back to at least 1086.



The annual meeting of the Town Council; 'Mayor Making' takes place in May of each year in the Town Hall, swearing in the new Mayor and celebrating Dover's civic history and heritage. It is an opportunity for the people of Dover to witness an event that is hundreds of years old; it is one of the handful of times each year that Councillors wear full robes.

Cllr Pam Brivio of Tower Hamlets was unanimously elected Mayor for 2014-15, carrying out over 350 engagements mostly in Dover with local organisations.



Mr Graham Tutthill was elected an Honorary Freeman of Dover and his name inscribed in the Roll of Freeman to great acclaim!

This year there was storm damage to the roof of Maison Dieu House, which led to a major roof repair carried out by two local businesses. A flagpole was installed at the front of the building.

## **ALLOTMENTS, HORTICULTURE AND OPEN SPACES**

Our 200+ allotments remain extremely popular, providing opportunities for tenants to grow their own food while taking exercise and reconnecting with the natural world.

We have a maintenance schedule to keep the sites safe for allotment holders. 2014/15 saw major repairs to the track at Prospect Place, a new key system following tenants' suggestions at our Open Allotments meeting in Autumn 2013 and the installation of palisade fencing and blackthorn planting to secure Maxton and Prospect further.



*(Allotments in Dover)*

The Council provides an outstanding and well-used local nature reserve with open access to over 14 hectares of chalk grassland at Winless Down/High Meadow. We work with and fund The White Cliff Countryside Partnership (WCCP) to maintain, manage and conserve this land. The Council is part of the 'Up on the Downs' Heritage Lottery funding partnership to extend and improve access to our special landscapes. The Konik ponies continued to graze on our land, keeping the meadows in good condition and delighting locals and visitors.

The vital work that has taken place on Whinless Downs ensures that the land remains open and accessible to the public, for now and for future generations. 2015/16 will see the land left to the Council by Mrs Bessie Knott come under clearance and renovation to enlarge the Local Nature reserve in line with the declaration made by this council in 2003.



*(Konik ponies at High Meadow)*

The Town Council maintains Charlton Green beside the Dour, the Western Heights Sports Field (currently used for dog walking and casual leisure), Citadel Battery and two plantings on York St. During 2014-15, it contributed £7,949 to planting and grass cutting in Dover.

The Civic & Special Projects Committee gave its support to local people wanting to gain "Walkers are Welcome" accreditation to the town and we hope to see this achieved next year.

## **GOVERNANCE**

The Town council received an excellent audit report again this year. Dover Town Council is eligible to exercise the 'Power of General Competence' because the Town Clerk is qualified and there are sufficient elected councillors (as opposed to co-opted). Three new members of staff filled vacancies created by employees leaving for pasture new. Training included Licensing, advanced driving skills, Business English, Management of Open Spaces and Contract and Public Law.